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New York

President:	Mr. İlkin	(Turkey)
Members:	Austria	Mr. Mayr-Harting
	Burkina Faso	Mr. Kafando
	China	Mr. Du Xiaocong
	Costa Rica	Mr. Urbina
	Croatia	Mr. Skračić
	France	Mr. De Rivière
	Japan	Mr. Takasu
	Libyan Arab Jamahiriya	Mr. Dabbashi
	Mexico	Mr. Heller
	Russian Federation	Mr. Dolgov
	Uganda	Mr. Mugoya
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Parham
	United States of America	Ms. DiCarlo
	Viet Nam	Mr. Le Luong Minh

Agenda

The situation in Sierra Leone

Second report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Sierra Leone (S/2009/267)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in Sierra Leone

Second report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Sierra Leone (S/2009/267)

The President: I should like to inform the Council that I have received a letter from the representative of Sierra Leone, in which she requests to be invited to participate in the consideration of the item on the Council's agenda. In conformity with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite that representative to participate in the consideration of the item, without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, Mrs. Bangura (Sierra Leone) took a seat at the Council table.

The President: On behalf of the Council, I extend a warm welcome to Her Excellency Mrs. Zainab Hawa Bangura, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Sierra Leone.

In accordance with the understanding reached in the course of the Council's prior consultations, I shall take it that the Security Council agrees to extend an invitation under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure to Mr. Michael von der Schulenburg of Germany, Executive Representative of the Secretary-General and head of the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Sierra Leone.

It is so decided.

I invite Mr. Von der Schulenburg to take a seat at the Council table.

In accordance with the understanding reached in the course of the Council's prior consultations, I shall take it that the Security Council agrees to extend an invitation under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure to His Excellency Mr. John McNee, Chairperson of the Sierra Leone country-specific configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission and Permanent Representative of Canada.

It is so decided.

I invite Mr. McNee to take a seat at the Council table.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations.

Members of the Council have before them document S/2009/267, which contains the second report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Sierra Leone.

At this meeting, the Security Council will hear briefings by Mr. Michael von der Schulenburg and Mr. John McNee. I now give the floor to Mr. Von der Schulenburg.

Mr. Von der Schulenburg: In presenting to the Security Council the second report (S/2009/267) of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Sierra Leone (UNIPSIL), I would like to concentrate my introduction on four issues. First, I want to speak about the significance for peacebuilding of the joint communiqué between Sierra Leone's political parties. Secondly, I want to draw the Council's attention to the importance of the forthcoming special session of the Peacebuilding Commission for rallying international support around one common development strategy for Sierra Leone, namely, the Government's Agenda for Change. Thirdly, I want to highlight the new integrated approach to peacebuilding by the United Nations family, namely, the United Nations Joint Vision for Sierra Leone. Finally, I would like to add a few words on UNIPSIL itself.

Politicians do not have the luxury of choosing the political events and problems that they are confronted with, but they do have a choice in how to react to them. For that reason, we rate politicians not so much by the problems that they encounter but by the way they deal with them. Measured by that standard, Sierra Leone's politicians deserve the highest praise for how they handled the recent outbreak of political violence in their country when they came together and signed and committed to the joint communiqué on 2 April of this year.

We must all recognize the gravity of the sudden eruption of the political violence and intolerance that occurred in March. That was the most serious outbreak of violence since the end of the civil war in 2002. It brought to the surface deeply rooted historical differences and emotions that continue to exist in Sierra Leone. Those differences were fueled by a general dissatisfaction among many Sierra Leoneans that peace and democracy have not yet brought them significant improvements in their daily lives, and in particular by the frustrations that are felt by many young Sierra Leoneans who have no jobs and few hopes for a decent future. If continued unabated, those disturbances could have easily spiraled out of control and split the country between supporters of one party another, between members of one ethnic group or another, between the young and the older generation, between northerners and southerners or between citizens in Freetown and those in the provinces.

The joint communiqué between the two major parties, to which other parties also later pledged their support, has effectively ended the spiral of violence. But the significance of the joint communiqué goes much beyond that, as it recognizes the joint responsibility that both the governing and the opposition parties have in building a democratic and prosperous Sierra Leone. In addition to re-emphasizing national reconciliation and dialogue, the joint communiqué therefore stresses multi-partisan support for developing further Sierra Leone's democratic institutions — such as the Parliament, the justice system and the national security services — as well as for the need to create strong, credible and independent national commissions in the areas of elections, party registration, human rights and media supervision. The joint communiqué further recognizes the need to develop multiparty consensus on key national policies, such as on youth integration and employment, on the mitigation of regional rivalries, on the development of an independent media and on fighting illicit drug trafficking and international crime.

I believe that the joint communiqué, by combining a call for dialogue with an emerging multiparty consensus on core elements of State-building and national policies, is the quintessence of peacebuilding in Sierra Leone. I also believe that the joint communiqué could serve as a model for other countries that are in similar post-conflict circumstances. For those reasons, we should all work together to make the joint communiqué a success and to implement its various agreements in full.

I am therefore glad to note many encouraging signals in Sierra Leone from all political parties that they are serious in wanting to implement those agreements. In an unprecedented move, the leaders of all major political parties were invited to the recent congress of the governing All People's Congress, where they pledged publicly to work together and to put the interests of the country above those of their respective political parties. In a sign of reconciliation, President Ernest Bai Koroma visited the destroyed party headquarters of the opposition. In return, John Benjamin, the Chairman of the opposition party, visited the political party headquarters of the governing party. Leaders of all parties have repeatedly appeared together in public debates, including on national radio programmes, to call on all their supporters to work together and to reject all kinds of political violence. Regular multiparty talks have now started in Freetown, and it is planned to extend them into the regions. The youth wings of political parties are now meeting and planning joint confidence-building events. In consultation with the opposition, the President has now set up an independent inquiry into allegations of politically motivated sexual violence. We expect a further independent review to be launched within the coming days to look into the sequence of events that led to the political violence in March.

I would also like to stress, in this context, the support that the joint communiqué has received from Sierra Leone's religious communities, civil society, women's organizations and groups of artists. A call to observe the joint communiqué's agreements was made by all religious communities at both Muslim and Christian religious services around the country. Civil society organizations have translated the joint communiqué into local languages and distributed it widely.

Most importantly, however, a group of 26 young artists have formed the group Artists for Peace and developed two popular songs propagating the message of reconciliation and peace of the joint communiqué. Their songs can now be heard all over the country on radio stations and in youth centres. On 13 June, 40,000 young men and women from all parties will gather at the national stadium to welcome the Artists for Peace and to launch their tour around the country. There is no better way to mobilize Sierra Leone's youth around the

message for peace than through music, and I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Artists for Peace for their valuable engagement.

As a close observer, I witnessed the extraordinary courage and determination with which President Ernest Bai Koroma, the chairman of the main opposition party, John Benjamin, and the leadership of the political parties resisted the temptation to ride rising emotions or give in to long-established patterns of behaviour that re-emerged during the outbreak of political violence. In many ways, these bold political leaders decided to swim against the tide of polarization that had gripped parts of the political spectrum in the country, even within their own political parties. Allow me to therefore take this opportunity to salute the President, the leadership of the All People's Congress and the Sierra Leone People's Party and Sierra Leoneans in general for having chosen the way of dialogue over confrontation and for having agreed on such a far-reaching document as the joint communiqué.

Peacebuilding must be defined in Sierra Leone. It cannot be done in New York or in any other place outside the country. I am therefore pleased with the new approach that the forthcoming special session of the Peacebuilding Commission for Sierra Leone promised to take. At that session on Wednesday, we expect Member States to support all major local peacebuilding initiatives as an integrated package that includes the political parties' joint communiqué, the Government's Agenda for Change and the United Nations family's Joint Vision.

The special session will be a confirmation of how the Peacebuilding Commission here in New York and the Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Freetown can mutually reinforce their respective responsibilities and activities for the benefit of Sierra Leone. I would like to take this opportunity to thank in particular the new chair of the Sierra Leone configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission, Ambassador John McNee, for his foresight, vision and leadership in bringing this special session about.

We anticipate that the special session will set a clear strategic framework for development and peacebuilding in Sierra Leone by adopting the Government's Agenda for Change as the core strategy that will guide all future national and international development efforts. For this purpose, the special session is expected to call on all Member States to support the Government's Agenda and to adjust their bilateral and multilateral assistance programmes accordingly. With this decision, the special session will help the Government replace the approximately 32 different and often unrelated national, bilateral and multilateral strategies that have complicated development efforts in the past. By rallying efforts around one single national document, the Peacebuilding Commission will set the stage for a successful Consultative Group meeting for Sierra Leone that will be held in London on 18 and 19 of November 2009, with the kind assistance of the Government of the United Kingdom.

In Security Council resolution 1829 (2008) of this past August, the Council requested that a fully integrated peacebuilding office be set up in Sierra Leone. To achieve that, we have developed a joint strategy, the United Nations family's Joint Vision for Sierra Leone. The Joint Vision brings together UNIPSIL and all the 17 United Nations development and humanitarian agencies, programmes and funds that operate in Sierra Leone. In parallel to the Agenda for Change, the Joint Vision will cover a period of four years, from 2009 to 2012, and envisages a total financial envelope of $350 million.

With the Joint Vision, we have tried to break new ground, to develop new, innovative approaches and to establish joint implementation mechanisms. The Joint Vision reflects the special requirements for peacebuilding in Sierra Leone and combines the political mandate given by the Security Council with the development and humanitarian mandates of United Nations agencies, programmes and funds into one single strategy. With the Joint Vision we will present a well-coordinated, transparent and integrated United Nations approach to peacebuilding. The document outlines how the United Nations family will comply with the mandate of the Security Council, how we will support the Government in its development efforts and how our efforts will fit the wider development activities that are carried out by our international development partners.

In the Joint Vision we have not only agreed five joint priorities and defined our joint benchmarks but have also identified risks and outlined options for mitigating those risks. With its 21 programmes, the Joint Vision will provide for much more focused interventions by the United Nations family and establish clearer responsibilities for the preparation,

approval and implementation of those programmes. All those programmes are clearly aligned with the Government's Agenda for Change. The Joint Vision includes a number of other innovative features, such as the joint multi-donor trust fund, a joint outreach initiative, a joint network of regional field offices and a number of joint support services.

On Wednesday, we will present our Joint Vision at the special session and appeal to Member States to support us financially and politically. As the Joint Vision is, in many ways, the embodiment of the mandate that the Council has given us for creating a fully integrated peacebuilding mission in Sierra Leone, I hope that I can also count on the strong support of the Council.

In September, the Council will have to decide on a possible extension of our mandate, and I feel that this may be the time to mention a few issues regarding UNIPSIL that may help in guiding the Council's future deliberations.

UNIPSIL is now in its ninth month of operations. By now, we have largely completed the build-up phase and have developed a common peacebuilding strategy. The emphasis has now shifted towards implementation.

In transitioning from the United Nations Integrated Office in Sierra Leone to UNIPSIL, we have refocused our aims and reoriented our approaches in order to create a less dominant and more service- and support-oriented organization. We have reduced the staffing levels from 350 to about 70 staff members, but at the same time we have expanded our presence inside the country. In order to enable us to provide sound and reliable policy advice, we have increased considerably the share of professional national and international substantive staff and reduced the number of administrative and support staff. To underline a change in attitudes from a peacekeeping to a peacebuilding mission, we have moved to smaller and less costly premises, which provide a friendlier and more approachable atmosphere.

In building up UNIPSIL, we have also taken great care to maintain the temporary nature of the Integrated Peacebuilding Office. While we strive to give UNIPSIL a more forceful, focused and substantive configuration, we have, at the same time, tried to avoid the temptation of constructing permanent structures or creating long-term commitments that could inhibit a possible exit strategy if and when this will be decided by the Security Council. For this reason, UNIPSIL structures and approaches, through their integration with those of other United Nations agencies, are designed to facilitate a transition towards a more regular development set-up under a United Nations resident coordinator.

Allow me to end here by thanking the Government and the people of Sierra Leone for continuing to welcome UNIPSIL and me so warmly in their midst. Sierra Leoneans are a peace-loving, gentle and charming people who are so ably represented here by their Foreign Minister, Mrs. Zainab Hawa Bangura.

I would also like to thank my colleagues from the United Nations country team in Sierra Leone for all their support and for the excellent team spirit that exists among us. Finally, let me thank you, Mr. President, and the members of this Council for your patience in listening to me.

The President: I thank Mr. Von der Schulenburg for his briefing.

I now give the floor to Ambassador John McNee.

Mr. McNee: I welcome this opportunity to participate in today's meeting in my capacity as Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission's country-specific configuration on Sierra Leone. I think that regular exchanges of views between the Council and the Peacebuilding Commission foster greater synergies in the work of both bodies.

At the outset, I would like to congratulate the Executive Representative of the Secretary-General on his insightful briefing today and his very effective leadership of the United Nations peacebuilding mission.

I would like to focus on several key developments in Sierra Leone and, in particular, highlight the findings of my recent visit to the country and the preparations for the Peacebuilding Commission's high-level special session on Sierra Leone. The engagement of the Peacebuilding Commission with Sierra Leone has centred on three primary objectives: first, focusing attention on the political and security developments in the country; secondly, broadening the donor base and enhancing the coherence of international support to Sierra Leone; and thirdly, supporting new or improving existing activities in peacebuilding priority areas. The Peacebuilding Commission has received strong support for these

efforts from the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Sierra Leone (UNIPSIL) under the leadership of the Executive Representative of the Secretary-General.

The Commission's advocacy and resource mobilization efforts will culminate in a high-level special session to take place in New York on 10 June. That event will also mark a new phase in the engagement of the Peacebuilding Commission with Sierra Leone and will align its work with the peacebuilding elements of the Government's Agenda for Change.

In preparation for the special session, and in order to assess at first hand Sierra Leone's peacebuilding challenges, I undertook a visit to the country on 20 to 24 April. During that visit, I held meetings with Sierra Leone's leadership, including the President, the Foreign Minister and other ministers, members of the opposition parties, the diplomatic community, civil society and the United Nations family. In addition to extensive meetings in Freetown, the mission also visited Makeni in the North and, with the Foreign Minister, inaugurated a border post between Sierra Leone and Liberia. The visits outside the capital provided a useful opportunity to highlight the importance of subregional cooperation and to explore the challenges facing rural Sierra Leone.

The visit confirmed that the Government of Sierra Leone, with the support of the United Nations and other partners, has made commendable progress towards consolidating peace and democratic governance. However, as demonstrated by events in March, Sierra Leone's impressive democratic gains remain fragile and could still be easily reversed. High levels of youth unemployment, widespread corruption and the growing threat of illicit drug trafficking all raise the risk of relapse into conflict. More work is needed to consolidate reforms in the justice and security sectors, especially with respect to strengthening the capacity and the performance of the Sierra Leone police. Continued international support for building the capacity of State institutions will also be critical if Sierra Leone is to meet these challenges and chart a path towards peace and economic prosperity.

The Government of Sierra Leone is well aware of these challenges and its own primary responsibility for addressing them. The events of March, which represent the worst cases of politically motivated violence since the end of the civil war, were followed, as Mr. Von der Schulenburg has just explained, by commendable and timely action on the part of the President of Sierra Leone and senior leaders of both main political parties. International partners, and in particular UNIPSIL, also played a key role by supporting the Government's efforts to restore law and order and facilitating a successful outcome to the bi-party dialogue.

The joint communiqué signed by the two leading political parties on 2 April provides a comprehensive basis for improving inter-party dialogue, strengthening democratic governance and reforming key national institutions. Not only is the joint communiqué a significant achievement for Sierra Leone, but it could also serve as a helpful blueprint for countries in similar circumstances. The joint communiqué unequivocally demonstrates that political differences within democratic systems can and should be resolved peacefully.

Adherence to the agreements in the communiqué will require not only the political will of both parties, but also sustained support from the international community. In a statement welcoming the joint communiqué on 6 April, the Peacebuilding Commission encouraged both political parties to maintain the spirit of reconciliation that prevailed during the bi-party dialogue and called on all stakeholders to ensure timely and effective follow-up to the joint communiqué.

It is also critical that the United Nations and other actors continue to provide resources for the implementation of the joint communiqué. In this context, I would like to highlight the catalytic role played by the Peacebuilding Fund, which has provided timely financial support for the follow-up to the March events.

In addition to maintaining momentum and political support for the joint communiqué, the Peacebuilding Commission's special session will garner support for the Government's Agenda for Change, which was launched by President Koroma in May. The Agenda for Change is a robust national framework for growth, economic development and the consolidation of peace. It outlines a clear strategy for national action and international support. As such, the Peacebuilding Commission's future engagement with Sierra Leone will be aligned with the peacebuilding

elements of the Agenda for Change. The Commission will also continue to advocate for greater subregional cooperation, including the strengthening of subregional institutions and the promotion of gender equality and human rights. At the special session this week, the Commission will call on all Member States and international partners to recognize the Agenda for Change as Sierra Leone's core national strategy and to align their support accordingly.

The special session will also provide an opportunity to highlight the work of the United Nations family in Sierra Leone and to mobilize support for the United Nations Joint Vision. In our view, the Joint Vision represents an important innovation in the United Nations approach to peacebuilding and provides a solid basis for the Organization to achieve its integrated peacebuilding mandate in the country. The Peacebuilding Commission will also support resource mobilization for the Joint Vision by launching a multi-donor trust fund at the special session this week. I am confident that the effective implementation of the United Nations Joint Vision, under the leadership of the Executive Representative of the Secretary-General, will make a real difference in the lives of Sierra Leoneans and in consolidating the country's hard-won peace.

Peace consolidation in Sierra Leone continues to require collective and timely action. Both the high-level special session of the Commission on 10 June and the Consultative Group meeting to be held in November offer important opportunities for international partners to redouble their commitment to Sierra Leone. I am confident, given the leadership of the Government and the sustained support of the international community — including that of the Security Council — that it will be possible to address the remaining challenges to peace.

The President: I thank Ambassador McNee for his briefing.

I now give the floor to Her Excellency Mrs. Zainab Hawa Bangura, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Sierra Leone.

Mrs. Bangura (Sierra Leone): First and foremost, let me start by warmly congratulating you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for the month of June. I also want to register my sincere gratitude to you for inviting me to participate in this open debate on the second quarterly report of the Secretary-General (S/2009/267) on the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Sierra Leone (UNIPSIL).

At the outset, I would like to convey the sincere gratitude of His Excellency President Ernest Bai Koroma, as well as of the Government and people of Sierra Leone, to members of the Council for their sustained engagement with Sierra Leone and for the regular monitoring and stocktaking of current events in the country, aimed at ensuring that the peacebuilding process is on track.

My delegation's appreciation also goes to the Secretary-General, His Excellency Mr. Ban Ki-Moon, for his comprehensive report on the activities of UNIPSIL in the last four months. We acknowledge with thanks his exceptional contribution to the task of consolidating our hard-won peace and helping to put the country on the path to sustained economic growth and development. Our thanks also go to the Chair of the Sierra Leone country specific configuration — the Permanent Representative of Canada, Ambassador John McNee — for his dedication and commitment in building on the momentum nurtured and developed by his predecessor, the Permanent Representative of the Netherlands, Ambassador Frank Majoor.

We deeply appreciate the commitment, dedication and dynamism of the Executive Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Michael von der Schulenburg, and the entire United Nations family, as well as our bilateral and multilateral partners on the ground, for their invaluable contributions to the search for lasting peace and stability in Sierra Leone.

The present report validates the Security Council's decision to adopt resolution 1829 (2008), establishing UNIPSIL to engage the Government in the implementation of the Sierra Leone Peacebuilding Cooperation Framework. We concur with regard to many of the challenges outlined in the report and acknowledge that more needs to be done to continue to lay the foundation for sustainable peace and development.

We have come a long way, and clearly, the recent globally acclaimed electoral processes the country undertook in the last seven years since the attainment of peace should not be seen as end in itself. We are delighted to reiterate that with the support of the United Nations family as well as of our bilateral and multilateral partners the Government reached

significant milestones in consolidating peace. Security has been greatly enhanced across the country, thus providing an enabling environment for the population to engage in their day-to-day activities to improve their quality of life without fear or hindrance.

Many of the provisions of the recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission are being implemented in order to address root causes of the decade-long conflict that has left the nation with deep scars. On the question of the constitutional review process, the Cabinet has considered the report and referred the issue to the relevant Cabinet subcommittee chaired by Attorney General, as most of the remaining aspects consist of matters relating to the entrenched clauses of the Constitution. We have made significant progress in promoting the fundamental principles of human rights and restoring the supremacy of the rule of law as prerequisites for political stability, economic prosperity and social values in the society and for promoting positive general change as the underpinning theme of the Agenda for Change, a concise strategic framework conceived by the President to achieve quicker and sustainable results in our national recovery and peace consolidation process.

The Agenda for Change highlights key priority areas of intervention. These include, among other things, investment in the energy sector, agriculture, transport and communications, social policy aspects such as the health and education sectors, and infrastructure. This policy framework focuses on private sector development and macroeconomic stability. The Government also welcomes the Joint Vision for the United Nations family and is also in full support of the framework as a viable strategy complementing the Agenda for Change.

The International Monetary Fund recently lauded the Government's economic and structural reforms that have resulted in sustained macroeconomic stability, but it lamented that it lacks sufficient fiscal space for its development and poverty reduction programmes.

We are gratified by the collective decision of both the Government and the Sierra Leone country specific configuration to host a high-level special session on Sierra Leone on 10 June to mobilize support and resources for the implementation of the Agenda for Change and the Joint Vision in the furtherance of goals of the Sierra Leone Peacebuilding Cooperation Framework.

The politically charged atmosphere that translated into bitterness and violence between supporters of the ruling All People's Congress and the main opposition, the Sierra Leone People's Party, during the month of March in Freetown and Pujehun District was certainly a test of the endurance of our young and fragile democracy. In this regard, the President sincerely welcomed and gave his blessing to the timely and calculated move by the Executive Representative of the Secretary-General to bring the two parties together to sign a joint communiqué on 2 April 2009 in the presence of the President, Cabinet ministers and members of the diplomatic corps. That exemplary innovative approach to conflict resolution has helped enormously to reinvigorate our young and fragile democracy, as well as the national reconciliation process. As an immediate step, the Government has since banned the radio stations that instigated the skirmishes that led to the deterioration of the security situation.

We deeply appreciate the Council's continued engagement with the subregion, in particular the Mano River Basin, and stress the need to strengthen the revitalized Mano River Union, first in its effort to consolidate peacebuilding in Sierra Leone, Liberia and Cote d'Ivoire, and secondly to support the democratic transition process in the sister Republic of Guinea.

I would like to conclude my intervention by appealing for the Council's active participation at the 10 June high-level event at the required level. I also want to reiterate our call for the Council's continued support, understanding and patience.

Finally, I wish to reassure the Council of my Government's determination to maintain the momentum towards national recovery and peace consolidation by striving to overcome the lingering socio-economic problems of the country and to secure its future development.

The President: I thank the Honourable Mrs. Zainab Hawa Bangura for her briefing.

I shall now give the floor to members of the Security Council who wish to make statements.

Mr. Parham (United Kingdom): May I start by welcoming Foreign Minister Bangura to the Council today and thanking her for her very helpful briefing. We also welcome the report of the Secretary-General (S/2009/267) and the briefing we have just received

from his Executive Representative, Mr. Von der Schulenburg. We also very much appreciate and strongly support the work that Ambassador McNee has been doing to prepare for the special session of the Peacebuilding Commission on Wednesday. We encourage all Member States to give that meeting their strong support.

As we have heard, Sierra Leone is making progress in dealing with immediate threats to its peace and security. The President's Agenda for Change recognizes that development needs a stable, secure and peaceful society. The combination of national leadership and continued international support is crucial to consolidate the gains that have been made since the end of the war. Particularly crucial is the progress made towards an effective, independent security sector that has earned the trust of the public it was designed to serve.

Security, good governance and the rule of law are the bedrock upon which everything else stands or falls. Thus the March outbreak of political violence was an unwelcome reminder of the divisions that have scarred Sierra Leone's past and also of the role and power that the media can have in fuelling political intolerance. We commend Mr. Von der Schulenburg for the leading role he played in marshalling the response of the international community to those events.

The joint communiqué between the political parties has given a clear focus to the political role and profile of the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Sierra Leone (UNIPSIL). The task now is to ensure that local institutions gain the political maturity to assume such a brokering role in the future.

Perhaps it is too early to say whether a potential return to conflict has been averted, or that the adoption of a joint communiqué and the undertakings it contained will provide a lasting solution to the divisions and tensions that gave rise to the violence — although of course we hope that they will. There has to be sustained pressure for implementation of the joint communiqué commitments.

Regarding UNIPSIL, we note with concern that, as of the end of June, it will — it is hoped — still have reached just over 70 per cent of authorized staffing levels, and we would welcome some further explanation of why that is and of what is being done to ensure at least that relevant experts are in place in all the key areas.

Regarding the benchmarks, we note that they have now been agreed under the 1+4 priority areas of the Joint Vision. It is important that the substantive unit responsible for each area gets down to work. It is right that the benchmarks are challenging. We also need to keep in the back of our mind the kind of mission we want to move towards in the longer term and how UNIPSIL may need to evolve towards that. Current plans appear to assume a steady state through to 2012, but what intermediate outcomes will tell us whether UNIPSIL is on or off track?

The report sets out initial steps to integrate United Nations agencies, programmes and funds and to share facilities and costs. We welcome these, but we would suggest that bigger challenges lie ahead. The proposed sub-offices will be a welcome platform for joint working, but they do not guarantee it. That requires compromises and willingness on the part of all agencies to adapt and buy into the common United Nations Vision, particularly UNICEF and the United Nations Development Programme. Any reluctance to do so could ultimately undermine the whole United Nations effort and risk it re-splintering into uncoordinated, competing and often unfocused projects. We would welcome hearing more about what else can be done to lock United Nations partners into the Joint Vision.

Mr. Kafando (Burkina Faso) (*spoke in French*): I wish to thank the Executive Representative of the Secretary-General for the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Sierra Leone (UNIPSIL) and the Chairman of the Sierra Leone configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission for their very instructive briefings. I also welcome the presence among us of Mrs. Zainab Hawa Bangura, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Sierra Leone, and thank her for her statement.

The improvement of the overall situation in Sierra Leone is a source of satisfaction for us, even though there were waves of political violence and intolerance in March and April 2009 that call for increased vigilance by the entire political class in order to preserve the gains of the political and the peacebuilding processes. In that vein, we welcome the spirit of responsibility shown by the leaders of the party in power and the main opposition party, which has enabled the signing of the joint communiqué on 2 April 2009. We call upon them to respect their commitments and to set up monitoring and early

warning mechanisms to prevent such incidents. We also encourage the leaders of the main political parties to continue the process of national reconciliation and confidence-building measures and to ensure ongoing consultation on matters of major political concern.

We wish to pay tribute to leadership of UNIPSIL, with the help of some other countries, on the occasion of those events and the negotiating process for the joint communiqué. We hope the international community will support the parties in the implementation of their commitments, in particular the strengthening of national institutions in charge of security, justice and electoral matters, as well as the integration of ex-combatants.

We are encouraged by the willingness of the Government of Sierra Leone to promote the socio-economic well-being of the people through good political and economic governance and the fight against corruption. From that viewpoint, we are reassured by the statement just made by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Sierra Leone.

Unfortunately, despite efforts by the Government of Sierra Leone, the country still faces challenges which could call into question the important gains realized. Those challenges include in particular, and as recognized by the authorities themselves in the Agenda for Change, the vulnerability of the socio-economic fabric of society, which has been accentuated by the international financial crisis and the high price of basic goods, to which is added unemployment and underemployment of young people and renewed drug trafficking and transnational organized crime. Efforts must therefore continue to deal with those challenges. In particular, we encourage UNIPSIL and international partners to support the Government's Youth Empowerment and Employment programme.

We are confident that the good governance policies undertaken by the authorities of Sierra Leone enable them to mobilize the country's natural resources to finance the development projects. We call upon the international community to continue to support the Government as it implements its programme of peacebuilding, reconstruction and economic recovery.

Post-conflict Sierra Leone is on the road to recovery. It is thus comforting to note that in the area of peacebuilding, significant progress has been made on the ground with the contributions of UNIPSIL, the Peacebuilding Commission and Sierra Leone's bilateral and multilateral partners. We encourage UNIPSIL to continue to work in close cooperation with the Peacebuilding Commission, which we call upon in turn to support implementation of the Agenda for Change. We hope that the high-level special session of the Peacebuilding Commission devoted to peacebuilding in Sierra Leone, which will take place in a few days time, on 10 June, will enable the adoption of a joint strategy.

It is fitting to welcome the significant support from the Peacebuilding Fund, which has enabled the implementation of various projects. We also welcome the financial support granted to Sierra Leone in the framework of the implementation of the joint communiqué of 2 April 2009.

Special attention must be paid to the implementation of the Agenda for Change and the Joint Vision of the United Nations system for Sierra Leone, which, as the Council is aware, aim to bring together economic growth and sustainable human development. In order for the activities to support the people of Sierra Leone to be more effective, we stress the importance of close cooperation between UNIPSIL and organizations and other subregional institutions, that is, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the Mano River Union, international partners and other United Nations missions in West Africa.

We must also pay greater attention to the following areas: support for economic recovery programmes, strengthening the capacities of institutions in charge of security and the fight against drug trafficking and organized crime in Sierra Leone, implementation of the recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, in particular through ongoing support for the compensation programme for victims of the conflict, and support for programmes for good governance and strengthening of democratic institutions.

No one can deny that the peacebuilding process in Sierra Leone is progressing satisfactorily, but those enthusiastic national efforts must continue and the people and authorities of Sierra Leone must remain deeply committed to assuming their share of responsibility. We are convinced that the international community, in particular, the Security Council and the Peacebuilding Commission, will accompany those developments without hesitation, as ECOWAS and the African Union continue to do.

Ms. DiCarlo (United States of America): Let me begin by welcoming Mrs. Zainab Hawa Bangura, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Sierra Leone, to the Council and by expressing appreciation for her comments. I also would like to thank Executive Representative Von der Schulenburg, for his report and Ambassador McNee, Chairman of the Sierra Leone configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission, for his briefing.

The United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Sierra Leone (UNIPSIL) was launched in October 2008 as a pilot programme that reflected evolving international community thinking about how best to facilitate the transition from a successful peacekeeping operation — in this case, the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone — to peacebuilding. UNIPSIL and Sierra Leone have faced serious challenges. Political intolerance, youth unemployment and drug trafficking have combined in an explosive mix in Sierra Leone. But the country is weathering those challenges and continuing to consolidate the peace that has endured these seven years since the end of the conflict. UNIPSIL has proved to be an important facilitator of Sierra Leone's democratic transition, most recently in its support of the national authorities working to end political violence and in its mediation between the two major parties that led to the joint communiqué.

The United States congratulates Mr. Von der Schulenburg for the contribution that he and his team are making in Sierra Leone and for the value that that contribution will have in informing the larger international community's effort to develop best practices along the peacekeeping/peacebuilding continuum. We also wish to express our strong support for Ambassador McNee and for the efforts of the Peacebuilding Commission in Sierra Leone.

I would like to make a few further points regarding the situation in Sierra Leone and the United Nations role there. First, even as we commend all parties for achieving the 2 April joint communiqué and endorse UNIPSIL's ongoing facilitation of the dialogue envisioned, we remind the two major political parties involved, the All People's Congress and the Sierra Leone People's Party, that the international community looks to them to implement the communiqué. We are encouraged by the response of Sierra Leone's political leaders and we welcome the goodwill gestures of President Koroma and opposition leader John Benjamin. Such measures are important to achieving long-term reconciliation. We are also encouraged by the comprehensive vision for Sierra Leone's future contained in President Koroma's Agenda for Change poverty-reduction strategy.

Secondly, we would like to acknowledge the work of the Special Court for Sierra Leone. As the Court looks to the conclusion of the Charles Taylor trial and to the final disposition of appeals for all cases, the United States fully supports the Court's efforts to transfer its institutional knowledge to the Sierra Leone authorities, as described in the Secretary-General's report (S/2009/267). We believe it important to Sierra Leone's ongoing democratic maturation that all lessons of the past be fully absorbed, and the Special Court has much to offer in that regard.

Thirdly, I would like to refer to one aspect of UNIPSIL's mandate laid out in Security Council resolution 1829 (2008), which emphasizes the need for the United Nations system to support and cooperate fully with UNIPSIL. We welcome in that regard the finalization of the UNIPSIL and United Nations country team's Joint Vision strategy as a proposed blueprint for the United Nations family's future involvement in peacebuilding in Sierra Leone. We look forward to its careful consideration by the Peacebuilding Commission on 10 June.

We are well aware of the many risks that face Sierra Leone as it works towards lasting peace. In conclusion, I wish to touch on one in particular — drug-trafficking. We note with concern the increasing reports of West Africa being used as a trans-shipment route for the illegal narcotics trade. In that regard, we welcome the important steps that the Government of Sierra Leone has made to combat drug trafficking in its territory. The recent convictions of 18 people for smuggling more than 700 kilograms of cocaine into the country send a strong message to drug traffickers. Sierra Leoneans will not permit their country to be a haven for drug criminals. We also welcome UNIPSIL's work to strengthen the Joint Drug Interdiction Task Force.

Mr. De Rivière (France) (*spoke in French*): I, in turn, would like to thank the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Sierra Leone for her statement, as well as Mr. Michael von der Schulenburg, Executive Representative of the Secretary-General for Sierra Leone, and Ambassador McNee for their very

instructive briefings on the work of the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Sierra Leone (UNIPSIL) and of the Sierra Leone configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission.

The situation in Sierra Leone remains fragile but is under control. Like the Secretary-General in his report (S/2009/267), we welcome the fruitful efforts of President Koroma and the Sierra Leonean political parties to overcome their differences and to put an end to the cycle of violence. The signing of the 2 April joint communiqué is for us a key step in the relationship between the ruling All People's Congress and the Sierra Leone People's Party. That outcome is a further example of the resolve of the people of Sierra Leone to continue along the path of peace and democracy.

We remain seriously concerned by the growing drug-trafficking in the subregion and by its destabilizing effect on the most fragile States. In that regard, France welcomes the progress made by Sierra Leone to strengthen its fight against that traffic and the significant subsequent convictions. We would like to see stronger cooperation in that area. France is ready to support United Nations action to that end, which could make good use of the expertise and assistance of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime in fighting drug trafficking in West Africa. Progress has also been made in strengthening good governance, which is crucial to the economic and social development of the country. However, we remain concerned about the issue of sexual violence.

The international community must remain mobilized in support of the peacebuilding effort in Sierra Leone. We welcome the fruitful cooperation of the Government with the Peacebuilding Commission and, in that regard, await with interest the outcome of the special session to be held in two days. We encourage Sierra Leone's partners to maintain their commitment to supporting the implementation of President Koroma's Agenda for Change and of the United Nations Joint Vision for Sierra Leone, which identifies the key objectives of the peacebuilding process. In that regard, we welcome the development of a range of benchmarks and criteria for the implementation of that document.

In conclusion, we urge UNIPSIL to continue along the path of implementing its mandate.

Mr. Heller (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): We, too, welcome the presence of Mrs. Zainab Hawa Bangura, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Sierra Leone, to whose statement we listened very carefully. We also thank Mr. Michael von der Schulenburg, Executive Representative of the Secretary-General in Sierra Leone, and Ambassador John McNee in his capacity as Chairman of the Peacebuilding Commission's Sierra Leone country-specific configuration for their briefings this morning.

We are grateful for the work undertaken by Mr. Von der Schulenburg in the very complex situation in Sierra Leone. As this is the first time that Ambassador McNee has appeared before the Security Council in this capacity, we also wish to congratulate him on having assumed the chairmanship of the configuration and for the very active work that he has carried out since assuming that job.

We believe that it is important to highlight the efforts of the actors involved in fighting the socio-economic problems that confront the country through the implementation of concrete measures in the economic and social sectors, in particular the launch of agriculture and national production development strategies, the youth employment scheme and various programmes for police force training that help to entrench the rule of law.

We also believe it important to underscore the importance of launching the private sector development strategy in order to promote commercial activities conducive to socio-economic development and job creation. Such endeavours will undoubtedly lay the foundations for the prevention and resolution of conflicts and boost the development of the population.

However, we would like to express our concern at the various outbreaks of political violence and intolerance that have had an impact on the nascent democratic process in the country. We draw attention to the role played by the media, in particular by the radio stations of the political parties inciting violence. That is a clear sign of the prevalent attitudes among the main political forces of the country, and it seems to us that monitoring the role of the mass media is crucial to the peacebuilding process there.

In that regard, we also believe it essential to implement the recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, which are of great importance to ensuring that the mistakes of the past are

not repeated. Likewise, Mexico acknowledges the positive work carried out by the Special Court and its major contribution to transitional justice in the country.

We believe it imperative for the Government to resume the unfinished process of revising the Constitution through an exercise of transparent and inclusive dialogue in order to achieve the ultimate objective of consolidating the institutionalization of the rule of law, human rights and the democratic system.

Conversely, we are also concerned by the fact that in the context of globalization of organized crime, Sierra Leone is increasingly being used as a bridge for trafficking in drugs and the illicit arms trade. We therefore feel that it is vital for the United Nations Peacebuilding Office in Sierra Leone (UNIPSIL) to bolster its assistance to the Government of Sierra Leone in promoting dialogue and coordination with the countries of the region in order to combat the illicit trade in drugs and weapons by means of a focus on shared responsibility in the face of a threat to the security and stability of the region. That approach can scarcely be successfully tackled without the support of the international community.

My delegation awaits with interest the high-level special session of the Peacebuilding Commission on Sierra Leone on Wednesday, 10 June. We think that it is of the greatest importance that this event may enhance the international attention paid to Sierra Leone in order to generate sufficient backing for the joint communiqué of 2 April, mobile economic support for the implementation of the United Nations Joint Vision for Sierra Leone, and launch the United Nations multi-donor trust fund. We also attach great importance to the resolute support that can thus be generated for the initiative to fight poverty and to promote socio-economic development through the Agenda for Change, which will guide the actions of the Government until 2012.

The report of the Secretary-General before us today (S/2009/267) describes the very heartening political events of recent weeks, but also underlines the fragility of conditions in the country. A leitmotif throughout the report is the need, on the one hand, to maintain a sustained effort to consolidate achievements while on the other hand, to extend broad political support for the initiatives launched out of Sierra Leone.

We think that it is essential for UNIPSIL to continue to stand by the political dialogue given the signs of disagreement among the political parties and of potential violence while, at the same time, backing that process with the purpose of making progress in national reconciliation and the consolidation of democracy.

Mr. Takasu (Japan): I would like to welcome the participation of Mrs. Bangura, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Sierra Leone, at today's meeting. I would like to thank Mr. Von der Schulenburg for his very useful briefing.

The recent outbreak of violence between the supporters of the political parties in March reminded us that the situation in Sierra Leone is still fragile. However, the reconciliation efforts of the All People's Congress and the Sierra Leone People's Party led to the issuance of a joint communiqué on 2 April in order to prevent the escalation of violence. We are gratified that there is growing confidence that the culture of conflict prevention is taking root in the country. We sincerely hope that the trend towards reconciliation will persist.

We are also pleased to note that the Executive Representative played a critical role as a mediator in the course of the outbreak and supported the efforts of the parties to conclude the joint communiqué. This development clearly demonstrates that an appropriate United Nations presence on the ground with strong leadership will make a difference in the post-conflict peacebuilding situation.

We firmly believe that political stability and durable peace are achievable together with social and economic development. The peacebuilding perspective in pursuing development is of utmost importance for the political stability of many countries, including Sierra Leone.

To prevent a relapse into conflict, people must feel and see visible changes in their everyday lives. We therefore commend the leadership of President Koroma for formulating the development strategy known as the Agenda for Change. We sincerely hope that the priority areas set forth in the Secretary-General's report (S/2009/267) will be implemented effectively.

In particular, I would like to stress the great importance of the problem of youth unemployment. It is a serious concern because if it remains unaddressed it could be a potential threat to development and peacebuilding efforts. It is important to focus on the creation of employment opportunities, using all

available policy measures, including bilateral and multilateral actions. Conditions must be created for the appointment of a Youth Commissioner to enable the young generation to have hope for the future. It is also important that the development strategy be carried out effectively, through good governance and the institutionalization of the rule of law.

Japan's new partnership with Sierra Leone focuses on assistance in increasing food sufficiency through agricultural, rural and infrastructural development in and around the capital. These efforts are fully aligned with President Koroma's initiative. The global financial crisis most seriously affects vulnerable countries, particularly those in post-conflict peacebuilding situations. We should continue to support sustainable development and peace consolidation in Sierra Leone in every way possible.

In these efforts, the Peacebuilding Commission has an indispensable role to play. We applaud and are gratified by the fact that the Canadian Government has accepted to chair the country-specific configuration for Sierra Leone. We are grateful to the Chairman, Ambassador McNee, for his personal engagement and his first report to the Council today.

For the integrated peacebuilding strategy and Joint Vision to bear fruit, the Peacebuilding Commission's monitoring and advisory role will be essential. We are pleased that the integrated strategy includes energy, specifically the supply of electricity, as one of its five priorities. That is an innovation in the peacebuilding strategy, which traditionally focuses on security and the rule of law, inter alia. But people need electricity to feel that peace has arrived. We hope that UNIPSIL will continue to cooperate closely with the Peacebuilding Commission.

The special session of the Peacebuilding Commission on Sierra Leone on 10 June will be a good opportunity to review progress and to identify future challenges. We encourage the Government of Sierra Leone and the international community to make the best use of this catalytic role to mobilize necessary political and financial resources, not only from traditional conventional donors but also from new partners.

The Security Council, together with the Peacebuilding Commission, has the important responsibility to support the efforts of the Government and the people of Sierra Leone to make the transition from peacekeeping to peacebuilding a success story.

In conclusion, peace consolidation in Sierra Leone will contribute to the stability not only of Sierra Leone as a country and a people, but also of the entire subregion. We strongly believe that regional cooperation, with assistance from the United Nation and the regional organization, the Economic Community of West African States, is the key to successful peacebuilding. In this effort, the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Sierra Leone plays a vital role. We very much hope that the Secretariat will make an extra effort to speedily fill the key vacant positions in the mission.

Regional cooperation is vitally important in areas such as the fight against drug trafficking, the trade in light weapons and organized crime. We hope to see further developments in regional cooperation. Japan is committed to playing a constructive role for the stability and prosperity of the countries of the region.

Mr. Mayr-Harting (Austria): First of all, I would like to express our gratitude for the presence of the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Sierra Leone, Mrs. Bangura, and to thank the Executive Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Michael von der Schulenburg, and Ambassador McNee of Canada for their briefings.

The recent outbreak of violence revealed once again that Sierra Leone continues to suffer from its historical legacy and that the situation remains fragile. But the events are also a warning signal for peacebuilding efforts in Sierra Leone. They have shown that there is still a major challenge for the new and innovative approach the United Nations took in Sierra Leone with the establishment of the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Sierra Leone (UNIPSIL). None the less, in our view, the "one voice" approach of the United Nations has contributed positively to the determined manner with which Sierra Leone can overcome this crisis. In this context, let me also commend the personal contribution of Mr. Michael von der Schulenburg.

The violent incidents of March could have easily jeopardized the progress achieved so far in Sierra Leone. We share the Secretary-General's positive assessment of the prudent response by President Koroma and the political leaders of Government and opposition parties, which led to the signing of the joint

communiqué of 2 April. We hope that the communiqué will provide the necessary impetus to foster the dialogue so needed between the two main parties. We also hope the recent Government reshuffle will enhance the work of the Government and help to further improve the quality of governance.

Ambassador McKee of Canada, the new Chair of the Sierra Leone configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission, has welcomed the joint communiqué, which represents a significant shared commitment between the two largest parties towards the consolidation of democracy and peace. Austria concurs with him and the country-specific configuration of the Commission. The communiqué contains the basis for building a bipartisan consensus on important national institutions and policies. The follow-up and implementation merit our continued attention and support. Closer cooperation in the spirit of partnership between the Peacebuilding Commission and UNIPSIL could also help restore and sustain stability.

The recent clashes between sympathizers of different political parties have reminded us that transitional justice and reconciliation processes should be given high priority. The recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, which also form the framework for the deliberations in the Peacebuilding Commission, have been crucial in providing a road map in this respect. We welcome the fact that the implementation of the reparations programme as recommended by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission has now started. The work of the Special Court, under the leadership of its President, Ms. Renate Winter, and the completion of its work also merit our support. Its activities in the area of prosecuting individuals for serious crimes will be a milestone in this regard. The preservation of the Special Court's legacy domestically, including through the Human Rights Commission, will be of very great importance.

Austria notes with satisfaction the consistent trend towards increased respect for human rights. However, many challenges remain: female genital mutilation and other forms of violence against women are still widespread. Against that background, I would also like in particular to commend the fact that the signatories of the joint communiqué also agreed to investigate all allegations of rape and sexual violence against women during the events of 16 March and to bring to justice anyone who has committed sexual violence against women. Access to justice needs to be further improved, especially for women, and the judicial system needs to be further strengthened. We call on the Government to redouble its important efforts to address these challenges, with the support of the United Nations.

Austria also commends Sierra Leone for its efforts to maintain macroeconomic stability in spite of the deteriorating global economic environment. However, progress could be jeopardized by widespread poverty, corruption and the high youth unemployment rate. Continued efforts to integrate young people in the workforce need to be strengthened. The high numbers of unemployed youth with only limited or no hope for a better future, and that hope subject to party affiliation, continue to be a potential threat to political stability. In that context, Madam Minister, we are also very pleased with the contributions that the United Nations Industrial Development Organization is making to combat youth unemployment under the very able leadership of your countryman, Director-General Kandeh Yumkella.

The steps taken by the Government in combating drug trafficking are very commendable. We believe that cross-border organized crime should be addressed through regional approaches. The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) provide the framework for a long-term, comprehensive and coordinated response to these challenges.

With regard to the proliferation of small arms and light weapons, I would like to stress the important contribution of the ECOWAS Convention on Small Arms and Light Weapons, Their Ammunition and Other Related Materials, which was ratified by Sierra Leone as long ago as 2007.

Concerning the UNODC project proposal on building institutional capacity to respond to the threat posed by illicit drug trafficking and organized crime in Sierra Leone, we welcome the readiness of Sierra Leone to implement activities to fight trafficking and corruption. We also consider the project proposal on drug demand reduction in the context of youth unemployment particularly useful and hope that it will be finalized shortly.

Finally, allow me to draw the attention of the Council to the follow-up of the Praia conference, held

earlier this year, and implementation of the ECOWAS Action Plan. A draft programme concept of for joint assistance by the UNODC the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, the Department of Political Affairs, the United Nations Office for West Africa and INTERPOL in post-conflict scenarios, including Sierra Leone, was launched by the partners in Vienna last April and was well received. The next launch is planned in New York in mid-July, parallel to the report of the Secretary-General on West Africa.

Mr. Dolgov (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We too welcome Mrs. Zainab Hawa Bangura, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Sierra Leone. We listened very carefully to her assessment of the situation in her country. We are grateful also to Mr. Michael von der Schulenburg, Executive Representative of the Secretary-General, for his briefing on the activities of the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Sierra Leone (UNIPSIL), which he heads. We also thank Ambassador John McNee, Chair of the Sierra Leone country configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission, for his statement.

We are pleased to note that Sierra Leone is making steady process on peacebuilding, notwithstanding the political crisis that arose in March, triggering a wave of violence. The leadership of the country has succeeded in returning the situation to the path towards political stability. We highly commend the actions of the Government of Sierra Leone in that regard and note the constructive approach of opposition leaders, as well as UNIPSIL's mediating role in facilitating a resolution of the crisis. We call on all political actors in Sierra Leone to maintain a spirit of dialogue and consensus as they work to overcome their differences in the interest of addressing the complex tasks they face in post-conflict reconstruction.

The parties must fulfil their obligations as set out in the 2 April 2009 joint communiqué. In our view, among the most important tasks are to strengthen the country's State institutions, first and foremost in the security sector, and to resolve problems relating to the reintegration of former combatants. The international community must support the parties as they work to implement these agreements along with other programmes in the area of enhancing stability.

At the same time, we must not forget that the primary responsibility for Sierra Leone's future lies with the people of the country themselves. We welcome the completion of the work of UNIPSIL and the Sierra Leone country configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission on a Joint Vision for peacebuilding. The Joint Vision's priorities for building peace in Sierra Leone are clear-cut, tried and tested goals, and achieving them must be the focus of UNIPSIL's future activities. We highly commend the activities of the Peacebuilding Commission on Sierra Leone and hope that the Commission's forthcoming special session will be productive.

We note the generally satisfactory results achieved in implementing the 14 projects using Peacebuilding Fund resources. We also note the Sierra Leone Government's progress in addressing key challenges to stability in the country, in particular corruption, illicit drug trafficking and youth unemployment. We expect these endeavours to continue.

Tackling well-known cross-border threats to security is of continuing major significance for the long-term stability of the situation in Sierra Leone and in the region as a whole. In order to resolve those problems, it is important to continue close coordination between UNIPSIL and United Nations peacekeeping missions in neighbouring countries through the West and Central Africa Regional Office. Russia is prepared to take an active part in the peacebuilding effort in the country. We will continue to make every effort necessary to contribute to successful results in consolidating peace and stability in Sierra Leone.

Mr. Urbina (Costa Rica) (*spoke in Spanish*): Like other delegations, I too would like to begin by acknowledging the presence of Her Excellency Mrs. Zainab Hawa Bangura, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Sierra Leone, as well as to thank her for her statement. I would also like to thank Mr. Michael von der schulenburg, Executive Representative of the Secretary-General, and Ambassador McNee, in his capacity as Chairperson of the Sierra Leone country-specific configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission, for their statements. My delegation would like to underscore some points that are of particular attention for us.

First of all, with regard to reconciliation and national unity, following the regrettable events in Pujehun and Freetown last March, which led to a political crisis, my delegation commends the

committed and mature attitude of the officials of the two major political parties intended to halt the violence in Sierra Leone and achieve national unity. That has also ushered in a constructive dialogue on fundamental issues in consolidating the progress achieved with regard to democracy. We hope that that very commendable step will be followed by the establishment of independent mechanisms to investigate the incidents of political violence and the alleged acts of sexual violence that occurred during the crisis, with a view to preventing impunity.

Costa Rica also acknowledges the positive signals emanating from the Government and the Anti-Corruption Commission, as well as the measures taken against members of drug trafficking networks. We once again urge the Government and political factions in Sierra Leone to continue to work on those and other cross-border problems by taking a comprehensive approach and with the support of regional bodies and the entire United Nations system.

We also commend the progress made in the functioning of the National Human Rights Commission. At the same time, we respectfully call on the Government to continue its work to strengthen the observance and promotion of human rights, especially those of women and girls.

Costa Rica acknowledges the worthwhile efforts made by the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Sierra Leone (UNIPSIL) in order to finalize the Joint Vision of the United Nations system. We trust that the political and development criteria will serve as a key step in the process to consolidate peace in the country, and in particular to provide support for the implementation of the Agenda for Change. Likewise, we hope that the special high-level meeting of the Peacebuilding Commission to be held on 10 June will produce the expected outcome and secure the necessary financing.

Costa Rica joins the Secretary-General in encouraging the Government and people of Sierra Leone to take advantage of their significant natural resources in order to create a strong economy as part of the effort to achieve sustainable development.

Lastly, my delegation believes that the process of revising the Constitution continues to be important problem. In that regard, we are grateful for the information provided to us today by the Minister for Foreign Affairs. We urge her Government to make progress in that process.

Mr. Du Xiaocong (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): The Chinese delegation would like to welcome and thank Mrs. Zainab Hawa Bangura, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Sierra Leone, for her presence at today's meeting. We would also like to thank Mr. Michael von der Schulenburg, Executive Representative of the Secretary-General, and Ambassador John McNee, Chairperson of the Sierra Leone country-specific configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission, for their briefings on the situation in Sierra Leone.

We are pleased to note that the national political reconciliation and economic reconstruction processes in Sierra Leone have made progress. Following the conflict last March over local election disputes between the ruling party and the opposition, both sides demonstrated calm and restraint. Through international mediation and dialogue and consultation, they were able to prevent escalation in the violence. We appreciate those efforts and welcome the joint communiqué agreed by the two parties on 2 April, as it is conducive to rebuilding mutual trust between them and among political factions in Sierra Leone. We hope that the communiqué will be observed and implemented in earnest.

The Government of Sierra Leone issued its Agenda for Change last December as a document to guide the peacebuilding process in the country. The relevant United Nations agencies and international partners have also refocused their work in line with the Agenda. We welcome the courageous choice made by the people and Government of Sierra Leone to once again embark upon the path of reconstruction. However, they still face grave challenges in the areas of economic recovery, social development and rebuilding the judicial system. We expect that the political factions of Sierra Leone will continue to build consensus and strengthen cooperation in the area of nation-building. We hope that the relevant international assistance will be provided on the basis of full respect for the priority development areas and focus chosen by the people and Government of Sierra Leone, in order that the limited relief resources available will be used to genuinely address the pressing concerns of the people of Sierra Leone.

In a few days, the Government of Sierra Leone and the Canadian Chairmanship of the Sierra Leone

country-specific configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission will co-host a high-level meeting to discuss peacebuilding in the country. We call upon all parties to continue to follow with interest the peacebuilding process in Sierra Leone, as well as to provide financial and technical assistance for youth employment, economic and social development and other priority areas in the country. We support the Peacebuilding Commission and the Peacebuilding Fund continuing their positive role in helping Sierra Leone resume its development process.

Mr. Dabbashi (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) (*spoke in Arabic*): I should like to join preceding speakers in welcoming Mrs. Zainab Hawa Bangura, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Sierra Leone. I thank her for joining us today and for her statement to the Security Council. I would also like to thank Mr. Michael von der schulenburg, Executive Representative of the Secretary-General in Sierra Leone, for his briefing. I also thank Ambassador John McNee, Chairperson of the Sierra Leone country-specific configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission, for his briefing. In that regard, allow me to emphasize how much we support the activities of the Peacebuilding Commission in Sierra Leone.

Sierra Leone is a post-conflict African country. We are very keen to see that Sierra Leone is not involved in conflict ever again. The wisdom of the leadership of Sierra Leone, supported by the international community, has been responsible for many achievements along the road towards stability. It is of the utmost importance to defend the achievements that have been made and to build upon them towards a State characterized by stability and well-being, where violence among the people has no place.

The wisdom of the political leadership, with President Koroma at the forefront and with the support of UNIPSIL, succeeded in defusing the crisis that broke out in March. The country has been spared a new spiral of conflict. Regrettably, party-controlled media outlets played a prominent role in the outbreak of the crisis by encouraging violence, which led the authorities to take the wise decision to temporarily suspend their operations.

The political leadership in Sierra Leone has overcome the crisis. The joint communiqué between the two parties was signed on 2 April 2009; the three main political parties have now committed to it. We express the hope that they will be able to implement all of its provisions, particularly those pertaining to political participation, respect for State institutions and State bodies such as the police force and the judiciary, the creation of non-partisan media and the disbanding of militant youth groups.

The living conditions of most people in Sierra Leone are a source of grave concern. Prices, particularly those of foodstuffs, are spiralling, while unemployment is rife and the population relies to a large extent on remittances from citizens living abroad. In this regard, we express our appreciation for the efforts of the African Development Bank and donor organizations and States: despite the lack of resources, they have supported local food production within the context of the Government's reform policy. We look forward to further support being provided to the Government, as it lacks the financial resources it needs to implement its development programmes. We welcome President Koroma's Agenda for Change, and we express the hope that it will be implemented.

We take note with satisfaction of the results of efforts being made to support institutions such as the National Electoral Commission, the Independent Media Commission, the National Human Rights Commission and the Anti-Corruption Commission. We support the parallel plans adopted to provide job opportunities for unemployed young people. We note that young people played a central role in fuelling the disturbances in the recent crisis. Like Ambassador McNee, we also hope that the effective implementation of the Joint Vision of the United Nations family will change the lives of Sierra Leoneans and bolster the peace that was achieved after strenuous efforts.

In conclusion, we express our thanks and appreciation to the Secretary-General, the Peacebuilding Support Office and the United Nations country team. We congratulate them on reaching the political and development benchmarks for peacebuilding. We wish full success to the special session of the Peacebuilding Commission on Sierra Leone to be held on 10 June 2009. We call on all States to support that session.

Mr. Le Luong Minh (Viet Nam): I begin by welcoming the participation of Her Excellency Mrs. Zainab Hawa Bangura, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Sierra Leone, in today's Council meeting, and thanking her for her statement. I also thank Mr. Michael von der Schulenburg, head of the United Nations Integrated

Peacebuilding Office in Sierra Leone (UNIPSIL), and His Excellency Ambassador John McNee of Canada in his capacity as Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission's country-specific configuration on Sierra Leone for their briefings.

My delegation is certainly concerned about the recent outbreak of political and security tensions in Sierra Leone, which underscores the still-fragile situation there, which requires continued and urgent attention. Apart from the increasing divisions along regional lines throughout the country, Sierra Leone must also deal with the emerging threat of piracy, illicit drug trafficking and the illegal trade in natural resources, uncontrolled migration to urban centres, high numbers of unemployed and underemployed youths, and reductions in remittances and other adverse effects of the global financial crisis. All of these challenges have the potential to create an environment conducive to further violence.

In that context, we welcome the signing of the 2 April joint communiqué, in which the parties in Sierra Leone committed themselves to a cessation of all acts of political intolerance and violence and agreed upon a bipartisan consensus on important national institutions and policies.

We take positive note of the strengthened cooperation among Sierra Leone and the United Nations country team, the Peacebuilding Commission and other development parties to strengthen their areas of focus and the principles of national ownership, mutual accountability and sustained engagement, as contained in the United Nations peacebuilding strategy for Sierra Leone and the Joint Vision of the United Nations family for Sierra Leone.

We are further encouraged by the efforts of the Government of Sierra Leone to translate its Agenda for Change into further concrete results, particularly in such areas as fighting corruption, reforming the security sector, creating jobs for and empowering youth and combating drug trafficking and organized crime.

While commending UNIPSIL's efforts in carrying out its new mandate, as stipulated in resolution 1829 (2008), we believe that well-coordinated and interconnected cooperation among United Nations agencies, regional organizations and international donors remains essential to ensuring maximal use of resources, avoiding duplication of work and helping serve the best interests of Sierra Leone in each phase of its development.

Finally, I wish to reaffirm that Viet Nam will continue to support the efforts of Sierra Leone to sustain peace and stability, address the root causes of the conflict, promote national reconciliation and unity and strengthen its international integration process. We call upon the United Nations, the Peacebuilding Commission, the African Union, the Economic Community of West African States and the international community at large to continue to assist the Government of Sierra Leone in these endeavours.

Mr. Mugoya (Uganda): We, too, would like to start by welcoming Mrs. Zainab Hawa Bangura, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Sierra Leone, to the Council and to thank her for her briefing. We also thank the Executive Representative of the Secretary-General and head of the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Sierra Leone (UNIPSIL), Mr. Michael von der Schulenburg, for presenting the report of the Secretary-General (S/2009/267) and the Permanent Representative of Canada, Ambassador John McNee, in his capacity as Chair of the Sierra Leone country-specific configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission, for his briefing.

Uganda commends UNIPSIL, the United Nations country team and the Peacebuilding Commission for their efforts and support towards the implementation of the mandate of the peacebuilding mission in Sierra Leone in an integrated and coherent manner. We are particularly pleased to note that the United Nations peacebuilding strategy has been finalized and that all 20 projects financed by the Peacebuilding Fund to the sum of $35 million are expected to be fully implemented by the end of this year. The establishment of two regional offices in Kono and Bombali districts and the pending creation of six others will further enhance effective coordination among United Nations agencies, programmes, funds and development partners operating from one location in each district.

We welcome the initiatives undertaken and tremendous progress made by the Government of Sierra Leone under the leadership of President Ernest Bai Koroma in the political, economic and social sectors during the period under review. In particular, we note that the overall security situation in the country has remained largely calm. We are encouraged that, following the unfortunate incidents of political

violence in March this year, inter-party dialogue between the ruling All People's Congress and the main opposition party, the Sierra Leone People's Party, culminated in the signing of a joint communiqué by their leaders.

We call upon all political leaders to resolve any misunderstandings through dialogue and to desist from all acts of political intolerance and the incitement of violence. We further call upon them to ensure widespread publicity and the expeditious implementation of the joint communiqué, which lays the foundation for reconciliation and constructive bipartisan consensus on important national policies and institutions.

We commend the Government for making agriculture and national food production its top priority, as well as for initiating innovative programmes, including food- and cash-for-work activities. This focus on the agricultural sector is critical to the country's economic growth and food security and to the provision of employment for a large number of unemployed young people. In that regard, we appreciate the support extended by the African Development Bank, the European Commission, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the World Food Programme and non-governmental organizations towards the implementation of these key initiatives.

We call upon the Government, UNIPSIL, the Peacebuilding Commission and international partners to intensify their efforts in mobilizing the national and international funding needed for the consolidation of Sierra Leone's recovery, economic growth and development. The implementation of priority programmes, such as the Joint Vision, the peacebuilding strategy for Sierra Leone, the President's Agenda for Change and the private sector development strategy, requires substantial funding. We welcome the Government's ongoing plans to utilize and harness the country's natural resources for strategic investments that will spur economic growth and development.

My delegation supports the proposed launching of the United Nations multi-donor trust fund at the forthcoming special session of the Peacebuilding Commission, slated for 10 June, and calls for the further commitment of support at the subsequent Consultative Group meeting scheduled for November in London.

Sierra Leone still faces a number of challenges in consolidating peace, stability, economic growth and development. The capacities of national institutions, including the civil service, the judiciary and police, require substantial enhancement. We are therefore encouraged by the commitment of UNIPSIL and the development partners to support Government efforts in strengthening their capacity. Massive youth unemployment also remains a significant problem.

We are encouraged to learn from the Foreign Minister that consideration of the constitutional review report is now on course. It is imperative that the Government ensure the expeditious resumption of the process with wider public participation, as recommended by the Lomé Peace Agreement and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

Finally, we commend the recent steps taken by the Government in fighting drug trafficking, which should be sustained.

Mr. Skračić (Croatia): I would like to thank Mr. Michael von der Schulenburg for his briefing, as well as Foreign Minister Bangura and Ambassador McNee for their useful insights.

At the outset, allow me to express the deep concern of my delegation with regard to the political disturbances in Sierra Leone during the month of March this year. Croatia strongly condemns any attempt to resolve political divergences by resorting to force and violence. At the same time, and as stated in the report of the Secretary-General (S/2009/267), the recent disturbances, although having the potential to evolve into full-blown conflict, were swiftly and determinedly terminated. That fact undoubtedly testifies to the political wisdom and personal courage of the leaders and people of Sierra Leone, as well as to their strong determination to avert potential disaster and continue along the path of peace and stability.

In that context, we welcome the signing of the joint communiqué on 2 April by the two main political parties in the presence of all relevant political stakeholders, and the role played by the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Sierra Leone in helping bring it together, cementing Sierra Leone's return to the track of democracy and peace. We also welcome the anticipated intention of the third largest political party to adhere to the agreements contained in the communiqué, as well as the joint pronouncement made by youth groups affiliated with major political

parties of their intention to work towards political stabilization and lasting peace.

Croatia finds particularly important the agreements reached between the major political parties regarding bipartisan consensus on important national institutions and policies, such as the police and the judiciary, the reintegration of ex-combatants by the National Electoral Commission and other important issues. We also welcome the first signs of national reconciliation and political rapprochement as direct consequences of the aforementioned agreements.

We also commend the concrete steps taken by the Government of Sierra Leone to combat the trafficking of illicit drugs, in particular the formation of the Joint Drug Interdiction Task Force. In the same vein, we encourage the Government to continue its fight against corruption, as announced in the national Agenda for Change. We commend the Government for economic and structural reforms undertaken, as attested to by the International Monetary Fund during its most recent visit to the country. We hope that the Government will continue to seriously tackle the many burning economic and social issues before it, including youth unemployment and underemployment and corruption.

Croatia condemns the practice of genital mutilation to which, according to the World Health Organization, nearly 94 per cent of girls in Sierra Leone are subjected, and expresses its concern regarding ongoing sexual violence. We note with satisfaction the fact that the Government has finally put into place the machinery for implementing the reparations programme, as recommended by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

Croatia welcomes the completion of political and development benchmarks for each of the five priority areas within the peacebuilding efforts of the United Nations system contained in the Joint Vision. We also welcome the further implementation of the Joint Vision strategy through the opening of two regional offices, as well as the announcement of the forthcoming creation of another six regional field offices, aimed at achieving more substantial outreach and at enhancing the work of development partners.

Finally, Croatia looks forward to the special session of the Peacebuilding Commission to be held on 10 June, at which the Agenda for Change and the peacebuilding strategy of the United Nations should be fully endorsed and supported.

The President: I shall now make a statement in my national capacity.

I would like to thank the Secretary-General for his report (S/2009/267). I would also like to thank Mr. Michael von der Schulenburg, Executive Representative of the Secretary-General Ambassador John McNee, Chairperson of the Sierra Leone country-specific configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission, and Her Excellency the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Sierra Leone for their presentations.

Developments over the past months have shown that the advances that have been made in Sierra Leone in the consolidation of peace, reconciliation and prosperity remain fragile. Nevertheless, the political stakeholders in Sierra Leone have also proved that when confronted by problems they are able to rise to the occasion and address their outstanding problems in a peaceful and constructive manner.

Turkey welcomes the joint communiqué issued on 2 April in Freetown, and is pleased to see that momentum in the right direction has been maintained in Sierra Leone. That sets an excellent example not only for Sierra Leone's immediate neighbourhood, but also for Africa in general. Turkey applauds both the Government and the opposition for showing leadership in the face of adversity. We also congratulate the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Sierra Leone (UNIPSIL) for continuing to play a crucial role in consolidating progress in what was once a war-torn nation.

Sierra Leone still faces important challenges, and there is much work to be done. The task of concurrently fighting corruption, drug trafficking and youth unemployment cannot be taken lightly. Turkey believes that, with the support of UNIPSIL and the international community, the Sierra Leonean Government will be able to effectively surmount those obstacles. In that vein, we call on the international community to keep supporting Sierra Leone as it successfully navigates the challenges and difficulties that it faces.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

I now give the floor to Mr. Von der Schulenburg to respond to questions and comments.

Mr. Von der Schulenburg: First of all, I would like to thank all delegations for their support for our

team and the work we are doing there. That is great encouragement for us.

I would like to respond to two issues that were brought up by a number of delegations, in particular by the delegation of the United Kingdom. One is the level of recruitment at the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Sierra Leone (UNIPSIL). That issue is also of great concern to me. The number of vacancies, if we look at the substantive staff, is much higher than the percentage of vacancies that was mentioned.

There are reasons for that. One reason is that the budget was approved only in December, after three months of operation, and that delayed any recruitment process. The second is that we have tried to take a different approach to peacebuilding than that used in peacekeeping. That meant that I wanted our posts to be more substantive. I replaced many general civil affairs officers with actual experts who could advise on matters such as anti-corruption, rule of law, constitutional issues, illicit drug trafficking, et cetera. Those people are unfortunately more difficult to find. Also contributing is the change in remuneration in the United Nations system and the very fact that there is no long-term view for UNIPSIL. Potential qualified candidates, therefore, even when we select them, are not interested in or have rejected taking posts in Sierra Leone. I think that is a structural issue that we have.

The second issue concerns the links of cooperation with the United Nations system. I think the basic idea of peacebuilding is that it is essentially what I call development with a political agenda. So it was very important for me, from the very beginning, to fully integrate the mandate, which is a political mandate, from the Council, with the mandates that the various development agencies have. It is actually one thing, and that is why we developed the Joint Vision.

I must say that, based on my 30 years of experience, I think that the cooperative spirit we have among the United Nations agencies is the best I have seen so far in those 30 years. I hope it will continue. I think that the challenge to our cooperation actually comes more from the outside. One of the challenges relates to donors. If donors go beyond the Joint Vision and want to finance their own projects, they will always find takers in the United Nations family. But that, of course, would break the solidarity we have. Therefore in my opinion, one of the most important roles of the Peacebuilding Commission is to keep the international community organized and disciplined behind certain plans we have made, because money speaks for itself and that is something we will not have.

The other thing that I think is very important in keeping the mission together and working according to plan is that there must be more clarity on the future of UNIPSIL itself and the role of the Under-Secretary-General; these are short-term things and agencies think in the long term. I think that if we have a clear time frame — and I am not suggesting that the Council should take any decisions — that could help. But everybody knows that these are the areas we will work on for the next year, two years, three years or four years. Such clarity would thus help to keep us all together.

Personally, I am very encouraged by the work in Sierra Leone and the exceptional cooperation that we get from the Government and the good cooperation we get from the opposition party. I think we are very well received there. There is a friendly and constructive atmosphere among all of us, including the development partners. I think that is the kind of atmosphere that we should all maintain. In the framework of the Peacebuilding Commission, where we all meet together and look more at the development side of the issues, I think it is important to maintain that atmosphere. I am pleased with the new emphasis that the special session will place on taking more care to support what we do in the field, rather than having parallel tracks.

The President: I thank Mr. Von der Schulenburg for the clarifications he has provided.

I now give the floor to Her Excellency Mrs. Zainab Hawa Bangura, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Sierra Leone, to make a further statement.

Mrs. Bangura (Sierra Leone): I would like to express the sincere appreciation of my delegation for the interest shown. We take all the comments and concerns in good faith. My Government has taken full note of the issues raised regarding the constitutional review, sexual violence and the reparations process, as well as regarding our commitment to implement the joint communiqué.

On behalf of President Ernest Bai Koroma, I would like to thank members of the Security Council, our bilateral and multilateral donors and the broader

international community for their continued engagement and support to Sierra Leone.

I wish to reassure the Council of the commitment and cooperation of Government and all Sierra Leoneans in ensuring that Sierra Leone does not revert to conflict. I wish to reiterate my Government's determination to keep up the momentum towards rebuilding a prosperous, peaceful and free Sierra Leone for the benefit of all Sierra Leoneans.

President Koroma believes that failure is not an option and understands that of those to whom much is given much is expected. He is very much aware of how much the international community has and continues to invest in Sierra Leone and realizes that the best form of gratitude that Sierra Leoneans can show to the international community is to succeed. This we are all committed to achieve. We know with the Council's continued support and engagement, we will arrive at our final destination of a prosperous, free and peaceful Sierra Leone.

I would also like to thank the Executive Representative of the Secretary-General and the Chairman of the Sierra Leone country-specific configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission for their dedication and commitment to Sierra Leone's peacebuilding process. Once again, I would like to thank you, Sir, and the other members of the Council for your commitment and to call upon you all to support the high-level event of 10 June and to contribute to the multi-donor trust fund for the implementation of President Koroma's Agenda for Change and the United Nations Joint Vision.

The President: I thank the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Sierra Leone for her additional clarifications and for participating in our debate today. Madam Minister, we have very much appreciated your presence.

There are no further speakers inscribed on my list. The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The meeting rose at 12.15 p.m.